



NEWS RELEASE

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Let's Help, Inc. and Topeka Bible Church Receive Honors From USDA Rural Development

USDA and Let's Help Announce Rural Outreach Partnership

Topeka, KS – USDA Rural Development State Director Chuck Banks announced today that Let's Help, Inc. was honored by the Agency as an 'Outstanding Community Nonprofit Partner' and Topeka Bible Church was honored by the Agency as an 'Outstanding Community Faith-Based Partner'. The presentation was made by USDA Rural Development Housing Administrator Russell Davis as part of the President's Faith-Based & Community Initiative program during a stop in Topeka celebrating 'National Homeownership Month'.

Colette Murphy, President & Chief Executive Officer, received the award for Let's Help, Inc. and Doug Will, Director of Administration & Connections, represented Topeka Bible Church at the event.

Ms. Murphy in her remarks said, "We are honored to be chosen as the Outstanding Community Nonprofit Partner. Our partnership started with common concern for the needs brought on by natural disaster. At a time when housing was a rare commodity for victims of the hurricanes and local flooding, USDA Rural Development gave us tangible solutions to offer those in need. We're looking forward to extending this partnership through our Heartland SHARE program network to ensure Kansans throughout the state reap the benefits of our combined programs."

In addition to the awards being presented to Let's Help and Topeka Bible Church, USDA Rural Development State Director Banks and Colette Murphy of Let's Help announced a new and exciting partnership between the two organizations. Below is a brief summary of the two initiatives under the new partnership:

USDA / Heartland Share Initiative – working together to connect USDA RD with the HS partners across rural KS to provide housing information (homebuyer education, homeownership financing opportunities, rural rental housing information, etc.), and also info to assist communities to improve 'quality of life assets' (rural health care, essential community services, etc.)

Let's Help / USDA Housing Fair – second annual event, inviting all housing and homeownership resources/partners to provide info to very low, low and moderate income individuals/families about housing and homeownership opportunities.

U.S. Senator Pat Roberts, commenting on today's announcement, said, "I am pleased to see USDA's Kansas Rural Development office team up with Let's Help to really make a difference in the community. Occasionally Kansans have difficulty navigating the federal maze to get critical aid in a time of crisis for their families. The Let's Help/USDA Housing Fair, in its second year, is reaching out to those who need help."

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Roberts further remarked "This fair builds on work from another successful Rural Development partnership with the Heartland Share Initiative which has created an outreach program to provide housing information and other guidance to rural communities. This outreach effort helps those in need before they have no where else to turn."

Congressman Jim Ryun in his statement said, "I am pleased to send you greetings today as you announce your partnership with Let's Help, Inc of Topeka, Kansas during National Home Ownership Month. This faith-based partnership has the potential to impact citizens not only in Topeka, but also in the surrounding communities. I recognize the need for a faith-based housing program modeled after President Bush's Faith-Based and Community Initiative. Annual housing fairs and the Heartland Share Initiative will provide more Kansans with access to homeownership financing opportunities. I applaud this partnership of agencies and your commitment to improving the quality of life for the residents of Kansas."

Commenting on his Kansas tour, Administrator Davis stated, "I am very impressed with Kansas and its USDA Rural Development staff. I enjoyed reviewing Kansas projects assisted by USDA Rural Development, and I am pleased with the Agency's efforts in working aggressively with so many rural communities"

"We are very pleased that Administrator Davis chose to visit Kansas and tour these USDA Rural Development supported projects. The Agency is committed to assisting rural Kansas communities with their housing and community facility needs. It was important that the Administrator view the successes being accomplished across the State, yet we also discussed the challenges experienced by many rural communities located in the Kansas," remarked State Director Banks.

USDA Rural Development's mission is to deliver programs in a way that will support increasing economic opportunity and improving the quality of life of rural residents. As a venture capital entity, the Agency provides equity and technical assistance to finance and foster growth in homeownership, business development, and critical community and technology infrastructure in rural America. For additional information regarding USDA Rural Development programs, individuals may contact the Agency at 785-271-2700 or visit the Agency's Kansas website at www.rurdev.usda.gov/ks

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